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LIBERTY OF THE PRESS.

From the National Intelligencer.

PROPOSED REPORT BY MR HALL, OF VT.

On Incendiary Publications.

House of Representatives, April 6, 1836.

Messrs Gales & Seaton: In compliance with the written request of several members of the House, which the minority of the Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads do not feel at liberty to decline, I send you, for publication in the Intelligencer, a copy of the Report offered in their behalf to the House, on the 25th ultimo, on the subject of "incendiary publications." Although it retains its original form of a Report, it is of course to be deemed but an individual argument, divested of all official character. The request of our respected friends is the more readily complied with, from the circumstance that, on a question deeply involving, as the minority believe this does, the freedom of the press, no argument denying the power of Congress over the subject has hitherto been given to the Public.

Very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
HILAND HALL.

The minority of the Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads, to whom was referred that part of the President's Message which relates to "the circulation in the Southern States, through the mail, of incendiary publications," not having been able to concur with the committee in any mode of legislation on the subject, respectfully ask leave to submit their views to the House.

In considering the important subject submitted to the committee, the minority have not undertaken to ascertain what remedies may be afforded by State legislation for the evils complained of in the message, or to make any particular examination of the character and tendency of the publications against which the legislation of this Government is recommended. Taking it for granted *that, in the opinion of Congress*, the publications specified in the message have the dangerous tendency stated by the President, they proceed, at once, to inquire into the duties and powers of this Government in regard to their mail circulation.

Supposing the interposition of no constitutional obstacle, either of *four* modes of legislation might be adopted by Congress, to restrain the mail circulation of these publications.

1. Officers might be appointed by the Government to inspect and license all publications before they should be allowed admission into the mail, with power to include those of such character as Congress might designate.

2. Congress might adopt the legislation of the States as the basis of its legislation; and provide that it should be an offence against the United States for any person to send through the mail into any State any publication the circulation of which was prohibited by the laws of such State.

3. Congress, retaining the State laws as the basis of its legislation, might confine the penalties of its laws to the officers of the General Government, and provide for the punishment of such postmasters and other persons employed by the Post Office Department as should, *knowingly*, transmit through the mail any publications prohibited by the laws of the State into which they were directed.

4. Congress might make it an offence against the United States for any person to send through the mail, into any of the slaveholding States, any publications which Congress might specify, as having a tendency to excite the slaves to insurrection.

The minority are not aware that any other direct modes of legislation by Congress have been suggested, and, for the present, waiving the question of their constitutionality, they will proceed to examine the nature and character of each in its order.

The *first* mode, that of the establishment of a censorship over all publications, for which the benefit of a mail circulation was desired, must necessarily operate with extreme harshness. It is obvious that publications could not be licensed from an examination of their titles, for those might be no index to their contents; and political newspapers or literary magazines, mostly filled with other matters, might contain brief articles obnoxious to the law, rendering their circulation inadmissible. In order to make the law effectual, a censor must be appointed in the vicinity of every printing press, whose duty it would be to examine every number of every periodical, and every edition of all other publications, for which a mail circulation was sought, and certify their fitness for such circulation to the postmasters; or the postmasters themselves must be erected into censors, with power to break the envelopes of all packages deposited in their respective offices, to examine their contents, and either receive & transmit them, or suppress their circulation, as their judgments should determine them to be in compliance with, or a violation of, the law. One of the obvious legal effects of this mode of legislation would be to transfer the power of determining a publisher's right to circulate, from a jury of his peers to the summary discretion of any one of many thousand individuals. The medium of mail circulation has become so useful and important to the press of the country, and would be so trammelled and obstructed by the previous submission of all matters to be transmitted to the tribunal of a licencer, that this species of censorship could be scarcely less exceptionable and oppressive than a censorship that should extend to the restraint of the actual printing of publications. On the whole, a law of this description would be in such direct opposition to all the preconceived opinions of the People of this country, so abhorrent to their notions of the principles of civil liberty, and so utterly destructive of the freedom of the press, that the undersigned will not permit themselves seriously to apprehend that, under any possible circumstances, such a law can ever find a place on our statute book. They, therefore, dismiss this branch of the subject, without further comments.

The *second* mode of legislation, that of prohibiting the circulation by mail of such publications as the States shall prohibit, being founded on the principles set forth in the report of the Postmaster General, and having also, as is understood, received countenance from other respectable sources, requires a more thorough examination.

It is argued by the Postmaster General, that as Congress, by the fourth section of the fourth article of the Constitution, is bound to protect the States, "on application of the Legislature, or the Executive (when the Legislature cannot be convened,) from domestic violence," Congress is consequently bound to withhold the use of its mails for the circulation of such publications as tend to excite violence in the States. The constitutional question involved in this argument will be examined hereafter; our first object being to ascertain the extent of this obligation on the General Government, supposing one to exist, and to inquire into the manner in which it is to be carried into effect. The particular case which induced the argument of the Postmaster General is, the circulation of publications which are alleged to have a tendency to excite the slaves to insurrection; but his language is general, applying to all publications which any State may conceive tend to instigate revolts from its authorities. If one State has a right to call on Congress to enact laws to prevent the effect of a mail circulation of publications within its limits, any other State has the same right; and if the judgment of one State is to be received as evidence of the evil tendency of particular publications, the judgment of every other State must have the same force, and impose the same obligation on Congress. A statue, therefore, founded on this principle, would provide *that it should be an offence against the United States for any person to send through the mail into any State any publication the circulation of which might be prohibited by the laws of such State.*

A statute of this description would not only punish the citizen of Massachusetts before the federal court in his State, for sending publications by mail on the subject of slavery into Georgia, but would also punish the citizen of Georgia, before the federal court in his State, for sending a publication on any subject into Massachusetts, that subject, whatever it might be, having previously come under the interdict of the law of Massachusetts. Nor would it limit the extent of the operation of this statute to provide that the law of the State prohibiting the circulation of publications *should not be incompatible with the Constitution and the laws of the United States.* For it is to be observed that, although the Constitution of the United States prohibits *Congress* from making any law "abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press," yet it contains no such prohibition on the *States*. Upon the subject of the press the legislation of the States is only limited by their State Constitutions, and those Constitutions are subject to no control by the General Government so long as they remain "republican in form." It is believed that the Constitutions of most if not all, of the States contain some restrictions on the power of their Legislatures over the press, but, without such restrictions, the power would be full and complete, even to the establishment of a censorship. It is not perceived that such a power, alarming as might be its exercise, would be an infringement of the Constitution of the United States, or that the Government of the Union could exert over it any legal supervision. The Constitutions which now contain restrictions are liable to amendment and may be remodelled to answer any objects which the people of any State may, for the time being, desire to accomplish. A law, therefore, made in conformity with the principles assumed by the Postmaster General, would be limited in its operation only by the will of the People of any one State, serving to determine what publications it should be criminal for the citizens of every other State to send into that State by mail. In relation to publications on the subject of slavery, one State might enact that it should be unlawful to circulate such publications only as had a manifest tendency to excite the slaves to insurrection; another, with the same declared objects in view, might extend the prohibition to all publications on the subject of slavery; a third might confine its prohibitions to newspapers and small periodicals; a fourth might exclude the larger reviews and pamphlets; and a fifth might except from its prohibition the annual messages of the Governors of the several States, and speeches in Congress, while a sixth might include them. But the operation of the law would extend to all sentiments and opinions which any State might deem of dangerous tendency. One State might prohibit the dissemination of the Catholic doctrine; another, that of the Protestant; one that of one political sentiment, and another that of its opposite; and, under a law of this description, the extraordinary spectable might be exhibited of two district courts of the United States sitting on the same day in two different States, one engaged in passing sentence on an individual convicted under the statute for sending by mail a publication advocating one opinion, and the other passing sentence on another individual, convicted under the same statute, for transmitting a publication of the directly opposite opinion; the one publication being, perhaps, a satisfactory and conclusive refutation of the doctrines of the other. Some of the cases enumerated may be of improbable occurrence; but they all fall within the legitimate scope of a statute founded on a supposed obligation in Congress to prohibit the mail circulation of publications offensive to the States, and are all cases for which, under such a statute, a punishment must be inflicted whenever they should happen.

This law would possess another anomalous character, for which the minority have sought in vain for an example. It would refer to the laws of a foreign jurisdiction for the definition of the crime for which it provided a punishment; to laws which never had been, and never could be, legally promulgated to the accused. It is a legal maxim, "*Ignorantii non excusat legem*," that ignorance of the law is no excuse to the offender, but this maxim is founded on the principle that the laws are on record, open to inspection, and have also been published within the jurisdiction under which the offence is committed. No presumption can arise of the legal promulgation of the laws of a foreign Government, and yet the offender, by this statute, would be punished for their violation. He who would seek to avoid the penalties of such a statute, must, in point of fact, not only obtain a knowledge of the Constitution and laws of his own State, and of the United States, but also of the Constitutions and laws of every other State in the Union—Constitutions and laws which, together, would form a code, from the fathoming of which even a Coke or a Hargrave might well shrink, in some degree of despair. Surely, whoever, under the barbarous code of our Saxon ancestors, had sought the judgment of God in his favor, by walking blindfolded and barefooted amid burning ploughshares, would be called upon to encounter a no less dangerous ordeal, in treading the legal labyrinths formed by the provisions of this statute.

But, without dwelling longer on the practical operation of a statute founded on the principles of the report of the Postmaster General, the minority will proceed to inquire whether Congress, by making State legislation the basis of its own, would *draw to itself* any constitutional power to restrain the mail circulation of "incendiary publications." Such constitutional power is not supposed, by the argument of the Postmaster General, as the minority understand it, to be a general power in Congress over the mail circulation of such publications, but to be a limited power, depending on, and flowing from, the circumstance that the publications, in the opinion of the States, tend to excite insurrection. And the precise question now to be considered is, whether, supposing Congress to possess no general power to restrain the mail circulation of these publications, the power can be *derived from the fact of their being offensive to the States.* It is not denied by the majority that measures of the States for preventing insurrection should be examined by the General Government with respect, and that this Government, *so far as its delegated powers will admit*, should co-operate with the States in the execution of all their proper and necessary laws for that purpose. But the argument of the Postmaster General is in favor of a *derivative* power, and supposes a new substantive authority in Congress to arise from all alleged obligation to co-operate with the States in carrying their laws into effect. It supposes the existence of some power in the Constitution, which has been hitherto dormant, and which, if waked into activity, and written out at length among its articles, would read something after this manner: "Whereas it is intended by this Constitution to bind Congress to co-operate with the States in the measures they may adopt for preventing resistance to State authority; and whereas it may sometimes happen that Congress cannot render such legislative co-operation, by reason that no delegated power is found in this instrument enabling Congress to do so, or by reason that the legislation required by the States is of a character expressly forbidden by some of the prohibitory clauses of this Constitution: Now, therefore, it is hereby ordained and declared, that all State laws intended to prevent resistance to State authority shall be taken and deemed as conferring the aforesaid necessary power on Congress; and the said State laws shall also have the effect to repeal, *pro tanto*, all the prohibitory clauses of the Constitution which might seem to stand in the way of the aforesaid congressional legislation."

It must be apparent that nothing short of the power here stated would be effectual to confer the required authority on Congress. No argument in favor of this power can be drawn from any supposed principles of international law. For although the General Government, in respect to foreign nations, is necessarily subject to the general rules which the moral sense of mankind may have in some measure prescribed to regulate the intercourse between independent Powers, yet, in regard to the relations between the General Government and those of the States, the uncertain rules of the national code are abrogated and superseded by an instrument of Government, in which those relations are expressly pointed out and defined. Whether such derivative power exists or not, can only be determined by that instrument. The power can come from no other source than the Constitution; its existence can be tried by no other evidence. The minority have no hesitation in saying that, in their opinion, no such power is delegated by that instrument; and they have as little in declaring that no such power ought to be delegated. The prohibition of offensive publications is but one among the many means which a State may use to prevent insurrection. What dangers would arise from the exercise of a power of co-operation, riding above the prohibitory clauses of the Constitution in other cases than those of the circulation of offensive publications, it is not now necessary to inquire; though those of an alarming character might readily be stated. Even under this branch of the power, the derivitive authority supposed would enable a State combined with Congress to subvert some of the most valued provisions of the Constitution; and coupled with the obligation under which it is alleged to arise, by placing Congress and the whole People of the Union at the mercy of the State alone, would render the Constitution of little value. Of the dangerous nature of this triumphant power in State laws, something may be seen by recurring to what has already been said of the extent of the supposed obligation, from which the power of Congress is sought to be deduced—an obligation which might compel Congress to prohibit the mail circulation of all publications on any subject, whether moral, physical, religious, or political; and which, at the option of a single State, would impose on Congress the humiliating and suicidal act of aiding by its legislation in bandaging the eyes of every freeman in such State against the light of any argument it might desire to address them in favor of its own just powers of government, or against any unlawful assumption of power by such State. Had the project of the statute now under consideration been the law of the land in 1832, it would have been entirely in the power of the Legislature of South Carolina, by prohibiting the circulation of the President's Proclamation, to have made the President himself, and every individual in the nation, liable to punishment before the courts of the United States, for directing to an inhabitant of that State, and placing in the mail, a single copy of that document.

To show the existence of this obligation, that article of the Constitution is cited, which provides that Congress, under certain circumstances, shall protect the States from "domestic violence." It is to be observed, that such protection can only be given on special "application of the Legislature, or, when the Legislature cannot be convened, of the Executive of the State," and that then it is to be of an executive, not a legislative character. It is only when resistance to State authority becomes sufficiently alarming to induce the State Government to apprehend the inefficieney of its own means to suppress it, that it may demand of the General Government to furnish from its police, its army, its navy, or militia, a sufficient force to vindicate the supremacy of State authority; and such requisition, by the terms and spirit of the Constitution, must be obeyed. Instead of proving a legislative obligation on Congress, it seems to the minority that the language of this very article is almost, if not quite conclusive, to show that the framers of the Constitution intended to exclude from Congress the power to aid State legislation by legislation of its own. On any other supposition, how can their extreme caution be accounted for, of making the aid of the General Government of purely an executive character; of postponing such aid until actual violence has occurred, and then not suffering it to be given until a formal and direct application has been made, first, by the State Legislature, if practicable; if not, then from the Executive? Could the framers of this Constitution have supposed that a previous legislative obligation existed? Or rather, if they had intended to impose any such obligation, would it not, like the executive obligation, have been expressed, and the terms and conditions of its execution been equally well guarded and defined? But one answer can be given to these questions. The power of legislative aid was designed to be excluded.

Our previous notions of this branch of constitutional law are not erroneous. A State cannot call on Congress to make laws for the punishment of offences against State authority, as for the punishment of larceny, arson, robbery, or resistence to State process or laws. It is not in the power of Congress to exalt offences against the States into offences against the General Government. The jurisdiction of the General Government is confined to offences against its own authority, and cannot by any process of mystification, be extended to offences against the authority of the States. And if Congress cannot within the limits of a particular State convert offences against that State into offences against the United States, equally unconstitutional would be the exercise of this power of transmutation on acts committed without the State jurisdiction. Although Congress may prescribe, and has prescribed, the mode by which the acts of the Legislature of one State may be proved in the courts of a sister State, yet Congress possesses no power to make the laws of one State the rule of action in another, and to impose within that other a punishment for their violation. When Congress has original constitutional authority over a subject, it may doubtless adopt State legislation as the basis of its own. A provision in the statute of August 7, 1789, declaring that all pilots shall continue to be regulated by the laws of the respective States in which they may be, "*until further legislative provision shall be made by Congress*," is an example of this kind of legislation. But Congress in such case, instead of adopting, may, in its discretion, omit to recognize the State law, and supersede it by full and complete legislation over the whole subject.

The conclusion then to which we are drawn is, that if Congress has constitutional power to legislate for the suppression of the mail circulation of such publications as may be offensive to the States, Congress may exercise that power to the fullest extent, and can derive no constitutional aid from any reference to State laws. If Congress may pass the act under consideration, allowing the States for it to judge of the character of the publications to be prohibited, Congress may omit to delegate power, and exercise it itself. Congress may, and should, according to all the principles of legislation heretofore observed, fully define, in the act itself, the crime for which the punishment is to be inflicted. As before shown, Congress would, by this statute, commit to the several States the power of proscribing in their discretion, any and all publications, on any and all subjects. If the statute under consideration would be constitutional, it would be equally so were it a part of its provisions, that no publications on the subject of slavery, none advocating the religious belief of the Arminians, the Calvinists, or the Unitarians, none maintaining the doctrines of nullification, and none impugning the principles of the Administration, or the conduct of its officers, should have the advantage of a mail circulation; for all these, and an indefinite variety of other publications are within the scope of the powers committed to the State Legislatures by the provisions of this act.—Whether Congress has the constitutional power to pass such an act will be examined hereafter.

The minority will now proceed to notice the *third* proposed mode of legislation, which confines its penalties to the officers of the General Government, and provides for the punishment of postmasters and other persons employed by the Post Office Department for *knowingly* transmitting through the mails any publications prohibited by the laws of the States to which they are directed.

The constitutional power which is claimed in Congress to make this law, rests upon the same basis with that which we have just been considering. Admitting the Congress has no constitutional authority to judge of the tendency of publications, it assumes a power in Congress to act upon and carry into effect the judgment which may be formed of them by the States. That no such power exists has been already shown, and the argument will not be again repeated. But certain acts of Congress, which have been supposed to form precedents for this species of Legislation, require to be noticed. It will be remembered that the question is not now whether Congress possesses the Constitutional power to make this law; but whether such power can be *derived* from the State laws, or, in other words, whether the State laws, *per se*, impose an obligation or confer a power on Congress, to punish its officers for violating them. The minority admit that if Congress possess original constitutional power over the subject, it may so punish its officers. The friends of this measure conceding that no such original constitutional power over "incendiary publications" exists, seek to derive it from the authority of State legislation. In favor of this *derivative* power, the act of the 28th of February, 1803, entitled "an act to prevent the importation of certain persons into certain States, where, by the laws thereof, their admission is prohibited," has been supposed to be a precedent. This act, on examination, will be found to have no bearing on the question of derivative power. It was passed in virtue of an original Constitutional authority in Congress over the subject on which it operated. The act, it will be observed, was passed in 1803, and provided for the punishment, not specially of the officers of Government, but of *all persons* who should be concerned in the importation of slaves into any State which had prohibited, or should prohibit, their importation. It did not refer to the State laws for a description of the offence, but fully defined it. Now for the constitutional ground on which this act rested. The 9th section of the 1st article of the constitution, so far as is material to this question, is as follows: "The migration or importation of such persons, as any of the States now existing *shall think proper to admit*, shall not be prohibited by Congress prior to the year one thousand eight hundred and eight." This article was a *temporary* and *limited* restriction on the general power of Congress, "to regulate commerce." Without it, Congress might have immediately prohibited the importation of slaves into all the states; but, with it, Congress could not until the year 1808, prohibit their importation into any of the States that should think proper to admit them. On the power of Congress to prohibit their importation *into such States as should not think proper to admit them*, this article of the constitution imposed no restriction. Previous to the year 1808, several of the States having *prohibited the admission of slaves*, the original authority of Congress over the subject, under the power "to regulate commerce," came into full operation so far as it respected those States, and under that power the act under consideration was passed. It is, therefore, apparent that this act is no precedent for the derivative power contended for, but is only an example of the exercise of original constitutional authority. The act of February 25, 1799, entitled, "An act respecting quarantine and health laws," rests also on the same constitutional basis. That act, in substance, recognizes the validity of the quarantine and health laws of the States, and *directs the revenue and other officers of the government to co-operate with the State authorities in their execution.* These laws act upon a subject on which the powers of the General Government and those of the State Governments were peculiarly liable to produce conflicting legislation. The General Government has the exclusive power to "regulate commerce with foreign nations and among the States." Health regulations, being matters of internal police, belong only to the States. The laws which might be passed by the two authorities, under these two powers, would frequently operate on precisely the same thing. The same cargo of goods which was the subject of commerce, might also contain the seeds of disease. In order to promote the objects of commerce, congress might desire that, immediately on the arrival of the cargo, it should be landed and put on sale at the usual place for carrying on the business of merchandise. The State, to prevent the danger of infection, might wish to prohibit the landing of the cargo within its port of destination for a period of time. Here were two opposite independent powers, each exercising an acknowledged constitutional authority, and their legislation coming directly in conflict. What was to be done? Congress declared that it would so exercise its power of regulating commerce as not to interfere with the *reasonable* health laws of the States. The term *reasonable* is used because the act prescribes certain boundaries, beyond which Congress would not suffer health laws to operate. This act is undoubtedly, a precedent to show a commendable disposition in the General Government to prevent its powers from conflicting with those of the States. But it is no precedent to prove that Congress can derive any constitutional power from the State laws, or that it can cooperate in their execution by any species of legislation prohibited to Congress by the constitution.—It is at most, an example of the voluntary forbearance of Congress to exercise, in a manner not forbidden, one of its acknowledged powers. It is also to be remarked, in regard to this law, that it imposes no penalty on the officers of government for neglecting to co-operate in the execution of the health laws. A person appointed to office under the General Government, is not thereby released from his obligation to the State in which he may be. In like manner as before his appointment, he is bound to obey the laws of such State, and aid in their execution, so far as they are not inconsistent with the paramount laws of the General Government.

The directions in this statute, though they pointed out to the officer a proper course of action, did not place him under any additional legal obligation, or impose on him any new penal liability. The directions were properly given in this instance, because they related to a point of duty, about which, from the apparently conflicting powers of the two Governments, the officer was greatly liable to doubt; and because they referred to a State law, in the execution of which the aid of such officer was likely to prove peculiarly useful and efficient. In so far as Congress, by this act, might be considered as making the health laws legitimate regulations of commerce, Congress might doubtless have provided a punishment for their violation. But so far as they remained properly health laws, the punishment could only be inflicted by the States. The omission of Congress to provide a punishment is evidence that they were deemed as still continuing to be purely health laws, and subject only to State punishment. The same rule must apply to "incendiary publications." So far as their circulation may be constitutionally restricted by Congress under its post office power, so far may Congress extend its penal sanctions; but, wherever its delegated powers cease, there must Congress cease to act. We are then thrown back on the question of what authority Congress possesses over "incendiary publications," by the grants of power contained in the Constitution, under the restrictions on the exercise of those powers found in that instrument?—a question which will be presently examined.

On grounds of expediency, this mode of legislation, having State legislation for its basis, is liable to the same objections with the last. It has others which are peculiarly its own; but which, from the length to which this discussion has already been drawn, will not be noticed in detail. The minority will barely observe, that this mode of legislation, though *in form* it merely provides a punishment for transmitting publications, *is, in substance an actual manual restraint on circulation*—a restraint committed to the discretion of ten thousand independent licensers, whose powers, though absolutely despotic and irreversible, are neither limited by any certain boundaries, or regulated by any definite rule. This mode of legislation is, therefore, obnoxious to *at least all the objections* that would belong to a plain, open, regulated censorship.

[*To be concluded next week.*]

From the Concord Freeman.

RENUNCIATION OF FREEMASONRY.

We cut the following article from the Boston Advocate of the 12th instant. We wish all the adherents af the Masonic Institution were possessed of sufficient moral courage and independence of mind, to shake off the fetters of an institution, as dangerous in its political tendency, as it is corrupt and deceitful in its boasted morality and charity.

Mr. Editor—About ten years ago I joined the Masonic Society. During the opposition which has since been made to that Society, I have been prevented from particularly examining freemasonry, as I sometimes felt it my duty to do, partly from a prejudice that there was an extravagant and wicked excitement against it and partly through fear that I should find its latent principles such as a christian could not approve, and hence be under obligations to abandon it.

I have also been encouraged in this neglect of examination from the consideration, that some ministers and other professors of religion, still continue their connexion with the institution.

From a recent anxious and prayerful investigation of Freemasonry, I have no hesitation in saying, that I consider its pretensions to be of scripture origin, wholly unfounded and false; I think it has oaths and obligations contrary to the laws of God and man, and the rights of conscience, and therefore null and void, and hence I feel no difficulty in disowning them.

Many of its titles are such as should be given to no man, and especially to no such persons as often hold the offices of the lodge.

I think it gives its members improper liberty to conceal crimes of the fraternity when less than murder and treason.

The name of Jesus Christ, though the Bible informs us there is salvation in no other, I find, is excluded from its prayers and formulas, and texts of scripture are quoted, with alterations, and interpolations, to suit this deistical and infidel feature of the institution.

Some of the miracles and sacred names mentioned in the scriptures, seem to be profanely referred to and trifled with, in the foolish and insipid rites of the society; and the ceremony of taking bread and wine by ungodly members of the lodge, appears to me little less than a mockery of the communion of the saints.

For these and other reasons, which might be mentioned, I earnestly wish that my friends, especially the professors of piety, who have not yet left Freemasonry, would dispassionately re-examine its peculiar principles, and I hope they will be induced to do as has done the subscriber, abandon their connexion with an institution of so exceptionable a character.

JOHN STOW.

South Reading, April 6th, 1836.